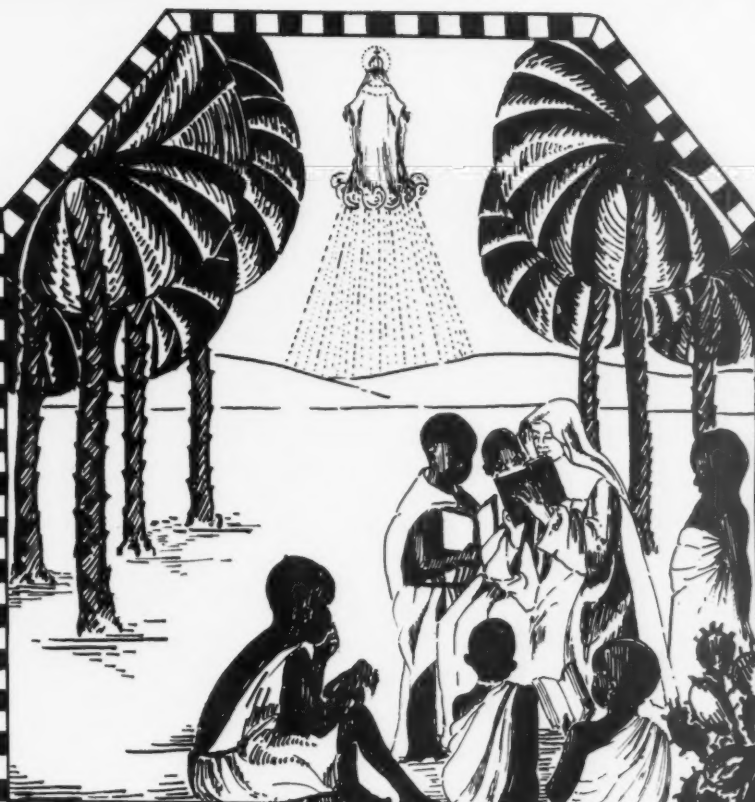




"THE
HARVEST
INDEED
IS
GREAT,
BUT
THE
LABORERS
ARE
FEW.
"PRAY
YE
THEREFORE



THE
LORD
OF
THE
HARVEST,
THAT
HE
SEND
LABORERS
INTO
HIS
HARVEST."

St. Luke x- 2

The
Messenger
of Our Lady
of Africa

Published by
THE WHITE SISTERS OF AFRICA

METUCHEN

NEW JERSEY

**RECOMMENDATION OF HIS LORDSHIP,
THE BISHOP OF TRENTON, N. J.**

I wish to recommend herewith most heartily the Apostolic work of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa. Their work is truly Apostolic and is most dear to the heart of our beloved Holy Father, Pius XI, the Pope of the Missions. Any encouragement that you may give to them will be blessed most abundantly by Our Divine Master, JESUS CHRIST, who died on the Cross that all men may have Eternal Life. This Congregation of Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa, we have made our very own in the Diocese of Trenton. Their work I have deemed most worthy of my special protection and I commend them most heartily to our good priests and faithful people.

Imprimatur:

+JOHN J. McMAHON
Bishop of Trenton,
Trenton, N. J.

"The work of the Foreign Missions surpasses every other work of Christian charity as far as the soul surpasses the body, as far as Heaven surpasses earth."

—Pius XI, The Pope of the Missions.

LET ALL BE MISSIONARIES

Everyone cannot leave home and country to go to the foreign missions, but all may become Missionaries, if by prayers and alms they help those to whom God has given a special vocation to work in the Field afar.

Whoever helps the Missionary in his apostolic labor will share in his merits and will be rewarded by Him who said: "And whosoever shall give only a glass of cold water to one of those little ones, because he is my disciple, Amen, I say to you he will not lose his reward." (Sy. Matt. 10-42.)

SPIRITUAL FAVORS AND ADVANTAGES

All those who help the missions in one way or another will share in the Masses, prayers and good works offered up daily by the Missionaries and the natives for their Benefactors.

Three Masses are celebrated every month for the intentions of the Benefactors.

For information apply to Rev. Mother Superior, 319 Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen, N. J.

**SEVERAL GOOD WAYS TO HELP THE
MISSIONARY SISTERS**

The perpetual adoption of a Missionary Sister	\$2,500.00
The annual adoption of a Missionary Sister	125.00
To support a dispensary for a year	40.00
The annual adoption of a child in one of the Sisters' orphanages.	40.00
To ransom a woman or young girl for a Catholic marriage	20.00
Provide bread for a child, yearly	10.00
Provide bread for a child, monthly	1.00
To build a hut for a patient in Central Africa	10.00
To support a leper in a hut for a month ..	2.00
To clothe a girl so that she may go to school for a year	5.00
To keep a sanctuary lamp burning for a month	1.00

The Messenger of Our Lady of Africa



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A FIRST COMMUNION AT ISSAVI The Retreat of the Little Negroes

THE LITTLE negroes are on retreat—called together by the Missionaries to come and take part in the exercises in preparation for First Holy Communion. They have come in great numbers from the districts surrounding the mission. Each carries on his head the provision of beans to be used for his nourishment during these three days; everybody expects to receive at the mission the pulp indispensable to their meals.

The room for catechism instructions has been cut off in order to receive them during the day, when the sun does not permit them to remain outside. Big colored pictures decorate the place and help the children to keep recollected—I do not dare to say silent—they are still so young; some do not count five spring-times!

Several times a day a Missionary Father comes to break the Bread of the Divine Word for them. A Sister is entrusted with going over the instructions, or with explaining what has not been understood. Besides, she helps all this little world to get ready for confession—a very sweet task to fulfill as long as the good will is great on the part of her young pupils.

This evening, the second day of the retreat, the retreat master has invited his little hearers to make the Way of the Cross with him, and all are faithful in responding to his call. The picture is strange to see. At the head of the procession walks the Missionary, armed with a long reed which will serve to point out on the pictures the different people whom he will mention. The children follow the priest and even cause a little confusion in order to get nearer to him. Some are clothed in a simple goat skin, others have only a piece of cloth for their entire covering; but all possess an enviable fervor.



The exercise begins with a prayer before the main altar. Then they go through the stations of the sorrowful Way, between each one of which the little negroes chant at the top of their voice:

O Maria, mama mwisa
O koubabara kwa Jesou
Ukoutwiboutse none.

(O Mary, good Mother, make us profoundly mindful at this moment of the suffering of Jesus.)

At the first station the priest explains why the kind Saviour has consented to suffer so much, not only for the whites, for the Fathers and Sisters, but also for the black children of the thicket, for all those who, being pagans, do not know this consoling truth. At these words prayer becomes ardent in order to thank Jesus, to ask His pardon, and to beg Him to reveal Himself to the millions of pagans who do not yet know Him.

At the fourth station the expressions of the little negroes become visibly agitated while contemplating Mary, the Mother of Sorrows, and the Missionary giving free scope to his zeal, says: "My children, if there is among you a single one who does not love Mary, let him get out of here!" And all immediately respond in a transport of frenzied fervor: "Father, we all love her. Mary is our own Mother, a Mother to us little negroes. Fear not, we will love her until death!" And the exercise continues.

When they finally arrive at the tenth and the eleventh station, the indignation of the negro boys is at its height. They no longer contain themselves. In spite of the sanctity of the place, a murmur is heard. Among others, I distinguish the voice of Petro, a youngster scarcely six years old, who gesticulates, lifting his arms threateningly:

"Ah! if my father had been there with his spear!"

And Martino continues:

"And if mine had been there with his arrows, those executioners would have seen some funny things!"

The other little children get behind the Missionary in order to see the picture better. Some shake their fists, other look as if they are going to cry. There are some even who make faces at the insolent crowd which is torturing Jesus.

From my place, I see the scene unroll itself, all the while making believe that I do not notice. Why should I stop such innocent manifestations of love toward the good Saviour?

The prayer ended, the childish band returns to class, still visibly stirred by that which has just happened. For an instant, I leave the youngsters to their salutary reflections, and when I come back, an unexpected scene presents itself to my gaze: under the influence of their ill-controlled indignation, the little ones have taken down the picture representing Jesus fastened to the column of the flagellation. Armed with thorns, they have torn out the eyes of the executioners who surround the Sacred Victim, and have snatched off the noses of others. The image of Jesus alone is left intact; His face is still damp with the kisses with which It has just been covered.

"Children, why did you do that?"

"Mother, since we heard Father tell us how much Jesus suffered our hearts have been filled with great pain. We can no longer look at these ugly people that is why we made them disappear!"

The Eve of the Great Day

The little darkies present themselves at the confessional, not without having asked the Sister many times the way to accuse one's self of such a sin.

And when, beaming with joy, they come back to class: "Mother," they say, "We are happy. Our hearts are as pure and white as your veil! We have gotten rid of our ugly sins, and the devil has been obliged to leave us alone. Jesus can come now; the place is all ready for Him."

And as the Sister asks questions to find out if they have followed her advice, and if they have begged their parents' pardon for any trouble they might have given them, Paulo relates:

"When my father had finished his supper last evening, he began to fill his long pipe. Then I went up and I begged his pardon. Tears flowed from his eyes. He rose and said to me: 'Paulo, my son, I forgive you, and in the name of your mother

who left us six months ago for a better world, and in my own, I bless you, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'"

The Visit of Jesus—The Feast

At dawn, the children press around their teacher, in order to receive the little white cotton dress that they must wear for the ceremony. They have been careful to have their hair perfectly shaved and to be thoroughly greased, which is an essential point of the elaborate "toilette" of a native.

When all are ready the signal is given. A procession is formed to the singing of the hymn I AM A CHRISTIAN, and they solemnly betake them-



First Communion

selves to the church. For chimes, a hand bell has been hung between two stakes at the door of the sacred place. Tom-toms beat with insistence and announce to all christendom the feast that is being celebrated at Issavi.

Our cathedral has put on its best attire; it is not rich, far from that: stained glass windows and figured stone are strangers to it; rush mats stretched on the ground take the place of benches and chairs. The altar is decorated with flowers, and oriflammes set here and there finish it, giving an aspect sufficiently satisfying to that simple gathering.

Before High Mass, the little negroes kneel down three by three at the altar rail in order to renew their

Baptismal Vows. With the hands placed on the book of the Holy Gospels, they very seriously fulfill this duty, then return to their places while awaiting the blessed moment when Jesus will come to visit them.

At the Communion, two Missionary Fathers distribute the Bread of Angels to the little ones. The spectacle is touching, and many tears silently glide down the faces of those present. The acts of thanksgiving seem fervent, and the prayers of our little Christians of yesterday seem ardent. May they obtain for their pagan brothers numerous graces of conversion.

But this delightful and unique hour in life passes rapidly and it is necessary now to interrupt the



communicants

divine colloquy in order to have breakfast, for I do not wish to give you the impression that piety has made the little black children forgetful of this detail of the program.

Upon their departure from church, each one manifests his happiness in his own way. A rosary is hung about the neck of each communicant, and they sit down at table, that is to say, on the ground, before large banana leaves set instead of napkins and plates. Two goats take the place of fat veal, and a pot of beans completes the menu.

"Bring it quickly, Mother that we may eat that good feast," cry the boys, in the excess of their joy; and as we warn them to be reasonable they answer

without hesitation: "Our stomachs are not like your stomachs, don't fear that!"

There is no other fork than that of father Adam, which does not in the least detract from the excellence of this rural dinner. The extreme poverty of our dear natives does not often permit such a feast.

For dessert, a pinch of salt is distributed to each of the guests, and all retire for a few hours, only to come back soon to assist at Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, which ends this great day.

The little negroes, as happy as kings, go back to their villages, promising never to forget the promises they have made to receive Jesus often in their hearts as on that beautiful day of their First Communion.

Sister M. Thomas Aquinas, W. S.

ECHOES FROM AFRICA

A New Cook for the Holy Father

The Sister in charge of the religious formation of the Natives Sisters was explaining to the postulants the virtue of obedience. She told them, if they made the vow, they would be obliged to go and work in whatever mission was assigned to them by their Superior.

"O," said one, "If God wants, I would go to N'boubou." (a few hours distance.)

"And I," said another, "would go as far as Tabora." (a few days distance.)

"I would even go to Rome," insisted a third.

The Sister somewhat surprised asked her what she would do in Rome.

"Why I would cook for our Holy Father."

"But our Holy Father does not eat l'ougari." (native food.)

"I know, Mama, but I would make him bread and cook meat for him."

Foresighted

Raphael, our faithful servant, was given a vacation in order to return to his home in Uganda to see his family and friends. Before leaving, he called at the dispensary and said to the Sister in charge:

"Mama, you know I am going home and the change of climate will give me fever. Will you give me a small quantity of quinine? It is colder in my village than here at Mombassa, so I shall probably catch a cold. I should like to have a little cough-syrup too. The change of diet, Mama, will give me colic. Would you mind preparing me a purgation? And Mama, I think I shall need some thing for a head ache. You know my friends will be so glad to see me that they will talk until my head aches."

Now say the Negroes are not foresighted!

Mary's Victory



Montalwe's
Grandchildren

ABOUT two weeks ago, one of our brave Christians came to notify us that Montalwe, an old pagan, was very sick, but he said: "My protege has forbidden me to let you know, he says he has neither need of you nor your words."

It was a hard case. How to come in contact with Montalwe? How to enlighten this soul that seemed to be the prey of satan? Turning to me my Superior said: "As you are the only Sister he knows, when you go to see Rosaria to-morrow morning stop to see him; however, since he pretends not to want anything from us let Petro offer him a miraculous medal."

After Mass the next morning, Petro was at the door. "Useless Mama, (name given to the Sisters in Central Africa) I offered him the medal and he replied, 'I have no need of it; wear it yourself,' I did not dare to insist."

Courage! our Lord knows all about the affair and he will not refuse His Blessed Mother the soul we have recommended to her this morning. My companion and I, escorted by a group of children, left confident in spite of all. On the way we recited the rosary without the little ones suspecting the aim of our visit.

In reaching Kaloulou, the village in which the pagan lived, we were greeted by several natives who were a little surprised to see us arrive so early. What could be the matter? Whose child was missing from school? When we assured them we had come to see, Rosaria—one of my catechumens whom I was told was ill—they were delighted then to have us.

"You love us as a mother loves her child," cried all those who had quickly assembled around us.

Then God willing it, a little girl called out: "My grandfather is also sick. Will you come to see him too?"

"That is not true," cried an old pagan, "I saw him in his garden this morning."

Not paying any attention to this information, we follow the little one straight to Montalwe's hut. He loves his grandchildren; so he will pardon the child for bringing us to him. I cried, "Anti" which is the equivalent for "May I enter?" There was no answer. Doubtless the invalid had recognized my voice. Accompanied by the child, who had opened the door for us, we entered and saw Montalwe stretched on his mat. Though we greeted him with great consideration, his reply was short and dry: still it was better than nothing.

"Perhaps you want to sleep?" I asked.

"Why shouldn't I want to sleep?" came the answer, and Montalwe turned his back to us.

Still keeping the same position he asked, "Why did you come?"

"We came to see Rosaria, who is sick and in passing we wanted to greet you."

"I am not sick."

"So much the better, your grand-daughter told us you were ill. I am glad to hear your health is good, but you do look a little pale."

"I assure you," he replied in a tone not to be answered; "I am very well."

Seeing our patient was in an uncomfortable position, I helped him to a better one. Montalwe began to realize that the Sisters were not so bad as he thought they were. He ventured to uncover his face, at the same time coughing with great oppression. I gave him a tasteful remedy which had a marvellous effect; so much so, that in leaving, Montalwe declared himself to be very sick, and asked us to come back to see him on the morrow.

The next day the reception was most cordial and the conversation, which began with rain and continued on nice weather, ended in the reminiscence of the happy days of his childhood. Then he asked us about our country and families. I showed him, quite by chance, a medal which my father gave me when I left him to come to the African brush. Montalwe was touched and he cried:

"You are my mother! You have made so many sacrifices to come to us poor Blacks!"

Happy with this success I tempted: "Since I am your mother would you not like a souvenir from me? Take this medal."

"You are my mother and you will always remain my mother, but for a present I want nothing but salt and bananas. A medal is good for a child; put it in your pocket; I do not need it."

"Well if you wish to please your mother at least pray with her."

"Pray? Yes, I'll do that."

Slowly, and for the first time in his life, Montalwe repeated after me the words that were pronounced for the first time by an angel. Hail Mary! . . . full of grace . . . the Lord is with Thee . . . pray for us poor sinners . . . now . . . and at the hour of our death.

During the following visit, I spoke to Montalwe of the Blessed Virgin and Heaven; then I exposed to him the great truths of which, despite his white hair, he was still ignorant.

"Go on and speak, I cannot answer; but I shall listen with joy."

That day when we were about to leave, "Mother," he said beseechingly, "put Mary's medal around my neck."

The cause was won. We had nothing more to fear; once again Mary had given us a proof of her

A CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR THESE, THE LEAST OF HIS BRETHREN

Will not the INFANT SAVIOUR be remembered on your Christmas list in the person of these, the least of His children? Rejected and scorned by their own, hundreds of little Africans seek the necessities of life from the White Sisters.

Will you help to feed them?



Any offering, no matter how small, will be greatly appreciated and when the HUMBLE BABE OF BETHLEHEM will come in His glory to judge you, you will hear His consoling words: "Come ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you. . . . For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat. . . . Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." (St. Matthew, ch XXV)

"There is only one thing to do here below: to love Jesus and to win souls for Him so that He may be loved." (The Little Flower of Jesus)

maternal goodness. However, baptism was not to be spoken of yet.

"One can go to heaven without that," declared the old pagan.

Our visits succeeded one another, and the disease seemed to make rapid progress. Faith gradually took possession of the pagan's heart; still he hesitated to put aside the customs of his ancestors.

"Don't worry about me," he would say. "When I am about to die I'll call you."

One night Montalwe sent for Petro. "Go call the Sisters; I think my last hour has come."

"But the Sisters do not go out at night."

"Then ask the Missionary Father to come. I want to die a child of God."

The Missionary went in haste to the moribund and regenerated him under the name of Josoufou

(Joseph). In spite of the sufferings of the old grandfather, the joy was great in the hut that night. In the morning his first words in seeing us were:

"My name is Josoufou. I am a child of God and no longer fear death."

Our joy was equal to that of our neophyte who unexpectedly came back to health from the grave malady that was the cause of his entrance into the Church.

Since then, Josoufou Montalwe is a practical Catholic, and gives his grandchildren an example of submission and respect toward the Missionaries. He has great influence in his village and it is obvious that his friends, other pagans, will soon join the class of numerous catechumens which is the hope of the Mission of Kaiambi.

Sister Mary Edwidge, W. S.

A Babe for Sale!

A YEAR ago a Mohammedan couple in tatters came down the slope of the Tacheta Hill not far from Saint Elizabeth Hospital in a place called the Chelif Plain, on the borders of the Atlas Mountains. The poor tramps, as they appeared to be, entered the village of Saint Cyprien where Arabs, converted to the Faith, dwell and cultivate the soil allotted to their grandparents by Cardinal Lavigerie of holy memory.

"A baby for sale! Who will buy a baby!" the man shouted at the top of his voice. Surprised at this unusual offer, the Christians came out of their houses while the stranger called out the louder: "A baby for sale! Who will buy a baby?"

"We do not buy children in this village," some one replied. "Children are not to be sold like poultry or cattle! If you do not want the child God has sent you, you better take it over to the Sister's Hospital."

The ragged couple took the hint, and to the Sister at the door they asked: "Will you buy our baby?"

The Sister accepted the little mite. Without a tear, without the slightest sign of regret, the unnatural parents, just as though they were ridding themselves of a heavy burden, thrust the child into the Sister's arms and went back to their abode, somewhere among the mountains.

The nursery had a new inmate that night and before long the abandoned infant became a child of God. Little Vincent is now more than a year old; he is taking his first steps and growing into a strong healthy child. He will soon clasp his tiny hands in prayer for the generous souls who contribute to his and his companions' education and instruction in our holy Faith.

A BABE UNDER A BENCH

Another similar incident will denote how easily Saint Elizabeth's nursery is filled with little Chris-

tians who were frail little heathens rescued from misery, slavery, and sin.

A Nomad woman come to Saint Elizabeth Hospital carrying a new born babe in a dirty rag.

"Here! Take my child; it is yours," she said to the first Sister she met in the garden.

"Why do you want to forsake your child?"

"Because his father has forsaken me. I must earn my bread, and I cannot do that with a baby."

"Poor woman, I pity you indeed. But I cannot take your baby for it is too young and needs its mother. Besides the nursery is overcrowded."

The woman drew herself up and made no reply. Taking hold of the infant, she swung it round and

fastened it on her back as is the custom in Africa. Then she walked away silently. The Sister stood watching her as she disappeared beneath the palm trees of the long alley leading from the hospital to the country road. Apparently the woman intended to return to her home, if she had one at all. The Religious whispered a fervent prayer to our Lady of Africa for the unfor-

tunate young mother and sighed.

"O God, if only the nursery could be enlarged!"

Sometime later in passing before the front entrance of the hospital the Sister heard the feeble cry of an infant. She soon caught sight of a bundle of rags under a bench. Picking it up she discovered the very same baby, that with deep regret she had had to refuse a few hours before. The mother, undoubtedly, had brought it back, placed it there, and fled. So the little creature was carried to the already over crowded nursery and in baptism received the name of Louis to which was added UNDERBENCH in guise of a surname.

Louis Underbench is now a good chubby little boy, who coos and laughs and claps his hands when the Sisters speak to him. Those little hands will soon clasp also, and united in prayer with Vincent, he will pray for his kind benefactors.



Vincent, Louis and Companions

